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ABSTRACT

Proposed reforms in education call for, among other things: developing K-12 schools as field sites for teacher education; professionalizing teachers to give them a greater voice in carrying out the responsibilities of their positions; and providing the opportunity for lifelong career development for teachers. Schools and colleges or universities have often initiated cooperative relationships to enhance the educational experience of their teachers, teacher-candidates, or students. This Digest provides a sampling of some of the different types of cooperative ventures entered into by some combination of K-12 schools and colleges or universities. (JD)

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WHEN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES WORK TOGETHER. ERIC DIGEST 88-20

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CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

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When Schools and Colleges Work Together

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Proposed reforms in education call for, among other things: developing K-12 schools as field sites for teacher education; professionalizing teachers to give them a greater voice in carrying out the responsibilities of their positions; and providing the opportunity for life-long career development for teachers. Strategies addressing these concerns often provide for personnel from more than one educational agency to design and staff a program together, commonly using such terms as cooperation, collaboration, partnerships and alliances. The call for this type of institutional relationship can be found in three major reform efforts: the new standards of NCATE, and the Holmes Group and Carnegie Forum reports urging the establishment of professional development centers for teachers.

Schools and colleges/universities have often initiated such cooperative relationships to enhance the educational experience of their teachers, teacher-candidates, or students. Such programs vary in size, complexity and duration, and range from simple, voluntary arrangements between a professor and school teacher to formal, funded, complex programs with committee structures and large-scale commitments.

Literature in the field describes programs of the following types: those that (1) provide instruction for pre-college students; (2) assist students in transition from high school to college; (3) assist pre-college personnel with solutions to problems in pre-college education or in developing school-based research programs; (4) provide inservice training to teachers on a specified topic; (5) conduct preservice teacher education programs at a school site; and (6) develop programs for the general training of educational personnel at the preservice, induction and inservice levels.

This digest provides a sampling of some of the different types of cooperative ventures entered into by some combination of K-12 schools and colleges or universities.

A survey of 46 Texas institutions of higher education found a majority to be engaged in collaborative relationships. Faculty in 16 of the colleges or universities were teaching in elementary and/or secondary schools in small, informal programs. Fourteen others assigned secondary-level teachers to instruct undergraduate and graduate students. The institutions and 35 teachers involved responded positively to survey questions about program value, and official representatives said the projects enhanced relationships among participating institutions. (Williams and Harris, 1984)

An individual initiative giving undergraduates an opportunity to teach art and study methods of art education on site at a local elementary school was started by George Szekely at the University of Kentucky. This arrangement enabled Professor Szekely to become acquainted with the school's teachers and to acquire more than the usual knowledge of the school's curriculum. It also gave him an opportunity to interact frequently with school faculty regarding the program and students, and provided a common context for class discussions. (Szekely, 1981)

A larger-scale program evolved from a Seattle school district initiative requesting School of Education faculty at the University of Washington to help develop an inservice program for district schools. University and school faculty worked together to implement an eight-step strategy devised by the school district to improve school programs and achieve such project goals as improving both the learning climate and the monitoring of student progress. The educators also collected and analyzed data on the schools, compiled profiles for each school to use in creating a self-improvement plan, and worked together on implementation activities, including staff selection, training, development (school-based), and evaluation. (Houston, 1986)

Another collaboration between a college and school system, Project Thistle (Thinking Skills in Teaching and Learning), tackled the problem of improving the basic skills of college-bound urban high school students. The project called for Montclair State College faculty to instruct Newark, New Jersey, high school teachers in the nature of higher-order basic skills and the use of curriculum resources, and to offer guidance in using resources to improve thinking skills. The project provided for three phases: graduate course work; classroom implementation under the guidance and support of college faculty, colleagues and school supervisors; and extension program activities (optional). The success of the project was demonstrated in the evaluation data compiled. (Oxman, 1984)

California State University also has five academic partnerships between its campuses and nearby schools. Its goals include an accelerated program for promising minority students; support for magnet schools; and the establishment of programs to train math teachers, upgrade high school science programs, and improve reading and writing skills. ("Academic Challenges: University and High School Partnerships," 1984)

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A national mandate to upgrade the education of low-income children united personnel from university, school district and community institutions in the National Teacher Corps Program, a largely federally funded effort. The focus of the project was to use research to address local problems, which involved conducting a study and developing a plan based on that study. Its goals were to improve school learning climate, provide staff development, and share the results with other institutions in the form of successful products (inservice manuals, etc.) and practices. (Nur, 1983)

The Teacher Center Program, a joint federal effort promoting collaboration, required its centers to staff their policy boards with teachers, administrators and university faculty members. The centers conducted needs assessments and developed plans to address those needs. Because of greater teacher control over inservice activities, the centers were able to continue after federal funding expired. (Edelfelt, 1982)

The problems of part-time teachers, as identified by the Houston Independent School District, were addressed in a joint effort including the school district, the University of Houston, and Texas Southern University. The partnership developed a training program for substitute teachers based on 20 two-hour modules. (McIntire and Hughes, 1982)

A program for gifted students was developed by a university-school district collaboration which sought to improve instruction of such students through improved preparation of their teachers. Cooperative planning led the partnership to found a summer institute for exceptionally bright junior high school students, where carefully selected candidates for teaching the gifted could observe instruction provided by master teachers. In the process, criteria for selecting such teacher-candidates were developed and applied. (Mulhern and Ward, 1983)

The Academic Alliance movement, patterned after medical alliances before the turn of the century, focuses exclusively on faculty members in specific disciplines. The organization, described by founder Claire L. Gaudiani and David G. Burnett in "Academic Alliances: A New Approach to School/College Collaboration," is composed of local communities of scholars who hold monthly meetings to promote intellectual and professional development. The alliances give participants recognition for accomplishments and the opportunity to shape their own professional growth, while the single discipline focus allows them to cut across student age and instructional site to promote a "shared life of the mind." Gaudiani and Burnett's publication, produced by the American Association of Higher Education, gives examples of several alliances, describes how to form one, and provides names of contacts for further information (Gaudiani and Burnett, 1985-86). Another publication, *How to Form and Operate a Local Alliance*, is available from the Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education.

Collaboration has come to mean the shared decision-making process for the governance, planning, delivery and evaluation of programs. The process involves personnel from different agencies who, by virtue of the general structure of their institutions, would not have worked together closely on the same

concerns. The process aims to enhance the ownership of those most directly involved with the implementation of instruction. The following elements were suggested by one series of projects as necessary for successful partnership programs: personnel resources and support, a well-defined focus, equal access and opportunity, continuity of learning for students, and program reform as an outgrowth of cooperative experiences.

In "A Conversation with Ernest Boyer," author Boyer identifies several problems in the development of collaborative relationships—the most obvious, the allocation of resources and the development of operating structures. Less apparent but even more important, he contends, is the need for a strong conceptual foundation and the commitment of all concerned. He also points out that, due to the nature of schools and colleges, it is probably necessary for a college to initiate contact in order to develop a collaborative relationship. (Boyer, 1982)

A major factor in such cooperative ventures is a new, expanded function for college faculty requiring them to play the roles of school consultant and university ambassador—establishing rapport with principals and teachers, attending school meetings and maintaining a regular presence in the schools, on average once a week. In addition, they function as skilled, informed neutral parties to the investigation of any problems that may arise within a collaborative program or structure. (Edelfelt, 1982)

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